

it is natural that British opinions should, in the main, be the basis of ours, and it thus happens that the little which is said and thought of Narvaez, in the United States, is tinged with the injustice prevailing at the source from which it comes.

Entering the diplomatic gallery of the Salon de Oriente, you found yourself not very far from the bench occupied by the ministers. At its head there sat — or frequently stood, receiving the salutations of the members as they passed — a man apparently a little over fifty years of age, and rather below the middle size. He was scrupulously well dressed, — sometimes almost too elaborately, — his figure erect and well proportioned, his bearing somewhat haughty, yet full of studious courtesy. But that he had place and power, which ladies love, it would not have been easy to conceive what had made him so proverbial a favorite with the fair daughters of his country; for his features, though striking, were hard and weather-worn, and the best Paris *perruquier* had not been able to make art as ornamental as nature. Sometimes he wore a ribbon at his buttonhole, but often he was without any decoration, and, save the aspect of the man himself and the deference which almost insensibly waited on his presence, there was nothing of outward sign to tell a stranger that the absolute ruler of Spain and its dependencies was before him.

If you waited, however, until the order of the day was called, and the discussion happened to be one of moment, it soon became perceptible that the leader of the ministerial phalanx was, by all odds and on all accounts, the leader of the Congress. Although, as I

have said, he left to his associates the consideration of details, he assumed absolute control over the spirit of the debate on his side of the question. Upon all points involving the dignity of the monarch and the integrity of his own administration, — upon all personal questions, — all occasions where there was play for that wisdom which comes of will, and, more than all things else, despotically sways assemblages of men, — his mastery was instantly manifest. It is true that his position, and the deference of the President and the majority of the Deputies, would have given great advantages to even an ordinary man; but there was that in the glancing of his fierce gray eye, in his condensed and pointed thought and his impassioned utterance, which made the parliamentary predominance of Narvaez obviously his own. Sometimes he was overbearing in speech, as he undoubtedly is in temper, but he would almost invariably make generous atonement, — often, indeed, so chivalrously, as to render his very trespass an element of sympathy. Occasionally he would fling out a stinging epigram, conceived in the very happiest spirit of popular oratory. “The honorable gentleman,” he said one day in reply to Cortina, one of the leading *Progresistas*, — “the honorable gentleman will have it, Sir, that the administration is indebted, for its failures, to itself, — for its successes, to Chance! I give Chance joy, Sir, of so eminent a votary as the gentleman! I congratulate the honorable gentleman himself upon the happy accident which, when he tossed into the air the seven-and-twenty letters of the alphabet, brought down the graceful combinations of his eloquent discourse!”

I was informed by a distinguished member of the

opposition, that Narvaez lacked fluency except in passionate appeals, and that his argumentative efforts were always carefully prepared, even to the extent of being written as they were delivered. If this be correct, the Spanish statesman does only what the greatest masters of parliamentary art have done, and wisely; but I can scarcely reconcile it with his impulsive nature and fervent elocution. His graver speeches were generally reserved to close the debate, — a course which he was particularly justified in pursuing, as well by the force of his character and influence, as by his power of analysis and condensation. He was never very long upon the floor, for he is a man of few words. His mind seemed to direct itself, instinctively, towards the heart of the controversy, — avoiding all things collateral and extraneous. He presented the strong points of his own case in the most compact, impressive way, and attacked the strong points of his adversaries with a directness and a gallantry which were always effective, and often triumphant. When he had finished his argument, his speech was finished too; and although men of finer elocution, more attractive fancy, more philosophical and copious thought, might, with their best ability, have gone before him, his summing up seemed always to have left the question at the very point whence you could see it best and judge of it most justly.

What I have said of the parliamentary efforts of Narvaez is perfectly consistent with the fact that he is not a highly educated or intellectually cultivated man. Although of noble connection, he spent the earlier portion of his life among the mountains of Andalusia, in narrow circumstances, without much chance

of converse with men or books. Many of his first speeches, it is said, gave decided evidence of the defects which so limited a career necessarily induced, and now his best efforts are but little indebted for their success to literary taste, historical illustration, or other men's theories and thoughts. His rapid perceptions, however, and rare memory, have made the brilliant opportunities of his later years stand practically in stead of the advantages of youth, and while, even in the midst of a life of action and excitement, he has been able proportionally to widen the sphere and multiply the variety of his acquirements, his extraordinary tact has converted him into as consummate a man of the world, as one with so impetuous and proud a spirit well can be. In the most polished circles of Madrid, surrounded by distinguished foreigners and the *élite* of his own countrymen, he would be selected at a glance for what he is, by any careful observer of men; nor would a nearer view disclose a single point, in which he would appear to fall below the high social standard by which his position exposes him to be tested. His accent and forms of speech are decidedly Andalusian, and his familiar conversation has, from this, a freshness and frankness rendering it at times exceedingly attractive. On the whole, however, his manners are more kingly than genial, and were it not that he is loyal and abiding in his friendships, — remembering benefits always, and rewarding services at every hazard, — he would seem more likely to command respect than win a warmer feeling. Nevertheless, there were many around him, at that day, whose devotion scarce knew bounds. His present political adversity will afford him an unhappy opportunity of testing their sincerity and constancy.

Rumor says that Narvaez has acquired large wealth by his political career. It would be strange if there were not some truth in this, for what Gongora said of his own generation has not gone out of fashion : —

“ La corte vende su gala,
La guerra su valentía.”

Rare is the public servant, now-a-days, who does not hive enough honey, from a summer in the gardens of the state, to sweeten the remainder of his days! I remember calling upon a venerable gentleman, who had filled for several years, with rare ability and punctuality, the post of Finance Minister under Ferdinand the Seventh. The modest simplicity of his household arrangements attracted the attention of my companion, a practised courtier, who exclaimed as the door closed on us, “ How unobtrusively that old man lives! Yet he was minister ten years! One who is minister for ten days, now, is considered simple if his fortune be not made!” I could not help recalling the bitterness of an apostrophe, which I had just read in a contemporary sketch of an eminent person, who, like our host, had passed without reproach through a life of temptation and opportunity. “ Console not thyself,” said the biographer, “ with the anticipation that generations yet to come will bless thy memory, or name thee as a model of propriety and honor! In the unhappy country where thou dwellest, and in the glorious times which thou and we have fallen on, though he who steals is called a thief, he who steals not is reckoned but a fool!”

An anecdote, related to me, unreservedly, by one of the parties, will show, that, although the passage just cited may have slightly exaggerated the evil for the sake

of the antithesis, it does no great injustice to the political habits of the capital. That the anecdote should be true, as I am sure it is, seems strange enough. That it should have been told, without hesitation, is stranger, but makes it the more characteristic, as a picture of public and private morals.

“ I am about to form a ministry,” said a prominent Deputy to a still more prominent Senator, — “ will you join it ? ”

“ No, — I am too old, and, besides, it will not last.”

“ *Vaya hombre ! Está vmd. loco ?* Are you mad ? You are surely old enough to be wiser. Take a secretariship, and pocket all you can get hold of. When you are tired, or have enough, you can join issue with the administration, on the popular side of some exciting question, and go out with your gains, in patriotic disgust. Nobody will interfere with you, if you keep quiet. You will have no rivals, because you will be in nobody’s way, and the people at large will venerate you too much, as a martyr, to think of molesting you or your money.”

“ *Y era sabio el consejo !* — It was good advice too ! ” said the Senator ; “ but I am too old for intrigues, now : and besides, I did n’t like his programme ! ”

If Narvaez has, indeed, been frail enough to yield to the temptations of his class and generation, he is, nevertheless, entitled to the credit of having done good work for good wages, — which is saying a good deal, as the ways of politicians are ordered in our day. An Aristides or a Washington is, of course, the best model for a statesman, but as that style is not prevalent just now, — except, perhaps, among candidates for the Presidency of the United States, — nations (in the Old World at

least) ought to be satisfied, if they can compromise for ability, firmness, and nationality in their rulers, without looking too closely into their accounts. The *Heraldo* of Madrid administered, one day, a most indignant and virtuous rebuke to some *curioso impertinente* in the *Patria*, who dared to suggest that the *Corregidor* of Madrid received a larger salary than he was worth. "To sift such matters too closely," said the ministerial organ, — taking the bull by the horns, in gallant style, like a true Spaniard, — "is to trifle with the proper importance of the authorities, and to take away from them the *prestige* and moral force, without which they will not be respected!" Narvaez, even if he be grasping, is, at all events, not sordid, — having all the good qualities of a soldier, though he may have some of the faults which too generally follow military men into the exercise of civil power. In exile, as in prosperity, his generous impulses have never halted at personal sacrifice. In the capital, as Prime Minister, he dispensed a liberal and magnificent hospitality, which must have scattered his harvest almost as rapidly as it was gathered. In this particular, his practice was perhaps the more remarkable, from its contrast with that of his colleagues, into whose houses no one was ever known to penetrate, except an occasional burglar or a man with a present.

A conversation which took place before me — and to which I am not precluded from referring, by its tenor or the circumstances under which I heard it — gives so fair an idea of the principles of action by which Narvaez has raised himself to power, that I may very properly close with it this incidental review of his most salient traits. A remark was made, by one of the com-

pany, in regard to the large number of robberies which the newspapers had recently reported. Narvaez replied, that he had no doubt there was much exaggeration in them. "I have been hearing of such things, all my life," he added, "and I suppose a great deal that I have heard has been true. Yet I have travelled, alone, in every part of Spain, — over plains and mountains, — by night and by day, — on foot and in the saddle, — often without arms, and sometimes with a very full purse, — without having once met a highwayman, to my knowledge, — certainly without having ever been robbed. I cannot, therefore, help thinking that I have a right to my doubts, and that the reputation of the country is entitled to the benefit of them." "Your Excellency's experience scarcely furnishes any basis for a general rule," was the reply. "Some men's fortunes (*la suerte de algunos*) are proof against all contingencies, and those of your Excellency were not fashioned for mishaps." "I beg your pardon," said the Duke, "I have no faith in any luck, except that which arises from foresight and care (*prevision y cuidado*). Luck would run equal and even to all men, in a year, on the doctrine of chances, and one who wants more of it than other men must make it for himself." It was natural enough that the winner of such heavy stakes should be unwilling to let the cards have all the credit of his game. As a loser, perhaps, he might have had no objection to throw the responsibility on *la suerte*. His life, however, has been an active illustration of his sincerity in what he said, and no one can doubt the wisdom of his conclusions.

Next to the President of the Council, on the ministe-

rial bench, sat the Secretary of State, the Marquis of Pidal. Like the other members of the Cabinet, he was among the *nobleza nueva*, or new nobility, having been formerly plain Don Pedro Pidal, without any marquisate, and having come, report said, from a very humble origin. The Asturians, however, of whom he is one, are all *nobles* in a certain sense, nobility having been gratefully and royally bestowed, by the wholesale and in advance, upon all who might be born within the Province, as a reward for the glorious and patriotic efforts of their fathers, who fought with Don Pelayo. The distinction is, no doubt, a very gratifying one, though its principal practical benefit, I believe, consists in giving them certain honorable privileges, should they happen to find themselves under the ban of the penal law. Before the abolition of hanging, by Ferdinand the Seventh, the Asturians were exempt from the degradation of that uncomfortable mode of dismissal. They were entitled to be *garrote-d*, in preference, — which was always held far more satisfactory and creditable. Not only that, but the law made further distinctions in their behalf. The *garrote* is either *vil* or *noble*, — vile or noble. The *garrote vil* does a gentleman to death upon a bare platform of planks, without luxuries or appliances of any sort. The *garrote noble* refreshes his eyes and consoles his feet with such carpeting as he and his friends may find suitable to their taste and fortunes. The Asturians were exempt from the *garrote vil*, except only when convicted of leze-majesty. For all other offences, they had the right to the *garrote noble*, and went to their reward, like gentleness as they were, according to the statute in such case made and pro-

vided. I take it for granted that the suppression of the hangman has not impaired this inestimable and inalienable privilege. Indeed, to allow them still their proper and equitable rank, they ought to be entitled to such an improvement in their furniture, on such occasions, as would give to the Asturian the precise degree of superiority over the vulgar *garrote*, which the *garrote* itself, in its totality, once enjoyed over the gallows.

But I am wrong in saying that the privilege which I have mentioned is the chief benefit the Asturians derive from their provincial patent of nobility. They drive a brisk trade, it is said, in *entroncamientos*, or family-trees, which they sell to the *nouveaux riches* from other provinces, who, like the Niger, have no source. You can purchase the very best commodities of that sort, in the Asturian pedigree-market, at a very reasonable rate, — a fact which may not be altogether uninteresting to those of our republican countrymen who are in the habit of seeking their ancestral arms at the British Herald's Office. To have come down from a hero who wore sheepskin breeches in the days of Don Pelayo, is quite as respectable as to have descended from

“An outridere who loved venerie,”

in the times of the red-headed William, and, *cateris paribus*, cheapness ought to be the guide of a commercial people, even in the matter of purchasing blue blood.

The Marquis of Pidal — who (with the reader) must pardon this digression to his Province — is a large and rather heavy-looking man. He might readily be

taken for the grave, laborious student of the legal antiquities of his country which he is, — but one would hardly have imagined him to be the best debater, as he was, among the *Moderados*. According to the character I had of him, he is, by natural inclination, a conservative, somewhat in the extreme, — so that he carried to the discussions in the Cortes a sincerity of conviction which many of his fellow-partisans could hardly have the gravity to claim. Although a lawyer of eminent attainments in the more recondite learning of his profession, he had not acquired, by any large devotion to its practical duties, that unfitness for parliamentary debate, which so many of his brethren, in other countries, have illustrated by conspicuous failure. Nor had he gone sufficiently beyond those fields of literature and history which lie near his own peculiar domain of legal antiquarianism, to embarrass himself with the broad views and theoretical difficulties which sometimes render philosophical statesmen as unready at the tribune as Athelstane in the tourney. He had tact and logical adroitness, — was bold and confident, — denounced the recreant, and whipped in the lagging, — asserted dogmatically what he could not prove, and indignantly denied what could not be proven against him. If need were, he could be sarcastic ; if pleasant satire suited better, he was no mean master of the weapon. Generally grave, however, he managed to surround his speeches and himself with an atmosphere of earnestness and authority, which made what was true the more effective, and kept the most of his opponents from laying hands profane on even what was false. All who know any thing of popular assemblies and

the oratory which impresses and controls them, will see the wisdom of the choice which made Pidal, with such abilities, one of the official defenders of the Ministry.

As Secretary of State, the Marquis was less of an acquisition. His general attainments were said to be limited, and he was particularly narrow, it was reported, in his knowledge of foreign countries, and his views of foreign policy. His habits of business were so extremely sluggish, that they had passed into a proverb. The verb *pidalear*, framed by a witty journalist upon his name, was held to signify the utmost effort of possible dilly-dallying and procrastination. The influences which had made him prominent were not, in the main, his own; for his manners — which do much in Spain — had somewhat of the rustic savor that his mountain education naturally gave, and his temper was by no means of the plastic sort. He had, however, married the sister of the former Finance Secretary, Don Alejandro Mon, whose superior advantages and real ability, with an excellent talent for intrigue, had given him access to the springs of power. The alliance made Pidal's fortune, and doubtless Mon found in him a useful yoke-fellow. They went generally by the name of "the brothers-in-law," and their friendship was supposed to be that of Damon and Pythias, rendered additionally durable and affectionate by an identity of interests. They were both Queen Cristina's men, and were supposed, like her Majesty, to have no very sincere regard for Narvaez, who had an unpleasant will of his own, and obstinately refused to be governed by that of any body else. It was for this reason that, as I have said,

they considered it prudent to have their own particular interests and opinions advocated by the *Pais*, instead of making common cause with the Ministry, and trusting to its formal organ.

Mon, some time before, had left his place in the Cabinet, probably not from choice, and he was believed, when I was in Madrid, to be upon such equivocal terms with the Administration, as to render it probable he would be advised to visit London for his health. The fiscal policy of his successor being, however, but a continuation of his own, he came forward to defend it in the Cortes during the debate on the budget. His speech was announced some days beforehand, and, as it was looked for with much interest, the floor was surrendered to him at his discretion. I was present at its delivery; but it was one so purely of detail, that I found myself without the information (or, as the Spaniards say, *los antecedentes*, the antecedents) necessary to a proper appreciation of its quality. I have no hesitation, however, in saying that, as a piece of elocution, it was worthy of the worst possible cause. The speaker's voice was thin and weak, his appearance not striking, his gesture hasty and ungraceful, and his articulation exactly what might have been expected from Demosthenes, during his first experiments with the pebbles. All parties, nevertheless, seemed to agree that the discourse was an able one, and it certainly was bold, explicit, and manly. I was glad to have heard it, if only to have learned what the orator authoritatively declared, that the Ministry intended to continue the modifications of the tariff which he had begun. They had resolved, he said, to remove the shackles

from commerce and production, and not to protect the one to the destruction of the other. The Catalan Deputies of course cried aloud, in anguish of spirit, at the announcement, but it was received with great approbation by all who were not manufacturers themselves, and had no constituents to whom the abuses existing gave profits of two hundred per cent.

There is no doubt that, if the muleteers were represented, as a class, in the Cortes, there would be great indignation on the part of their Deputies at the mention of a railroad, or the most delicate suggestion of a turnpike. The Asturian water-carriers, too, — through their honorable representatives, if they had such, — would probably be vehement in their denunciation of any change in the system of hydraulics, now so picturesquely carried out by themselves with donkeys and jars. But neither these good people nor the Catalonian monopolists have any right to suppose that the onerous absurdities and clumsy customs of the past will continue for ever for their benefit, or that Spain will be satisfied to lie still, like a leaf in an eddy by the shore, while the mighty stream of civilization and development sweeps the rest of the world along.

XIII.

SR. ARRAZOLA. — BRAVO MURILLO. — THE BUDGET. — MINISTERIAL MOVEMENT. — THE SENATE. — MODERADO PRINCIPLES. — BRAVO MURILLO'S SPEECH.

THE parliamentary pretensions of the Count of San Luis have been already referred to. Don Lorenzo Arrazola, the Minister of Grace and Justice, had but little reputation as an orator, although he was regarded as a sharp and subtle disputant. He was said to be particularly adroit in the defence of a bad cause, and as the government, his client, had many such, his services were proportionably valuable. Although he had not practised his profession to any great extent, he certainly displayed the characteristics of a ready, clever advocate, full of resource, cunning of fence, and, like many of that class, not over scrupulous, — at all events, in his logic. His manner was not impressive, for, though full of plausibility, he seemed to want conviction. In fact, the special pleading which he was frequently driven to, and for which he seemed to have a natural fondness and turn, impaired the substantial strength of his speeches, — as indeed it necessarily

must, without a miracle, destroy the vigor of any mind. Don Lorenzo's aptness at finding excuses must have been of singular avail to him in his particular Département, — the enormous patronage of which, unless managed with great adroitness, was as likely to make enemies as friends. I was often interested and amused, in his ante-chamber, watching the countenances of the numerous *pretendientes* to whom he gave audience, — almost all of whom came out with smiling faces, — many of them no doubt for the hundredth time. His enemies, political and personal, of whom he had many, insisted that he was *muy falso*, marvellously insincere; but that was perhaps more in the trade and the circumstances than the man. In early life he was reported to have been a *sacristan*, and afterwards a school-master, both of which callings, the light wits of the opposition used to say, were conspicuous in his manners and conversation. Be that as it may, however, he was, when I knew him, as he had for some time been, a very notable person. He has since been transferred to a distinguished judicial position, which I have no doubt he fills with great respectability.

In his Département, Sr. Arrazola was a model of industry. His duties, as has been said, were of the most various and complicated kind, but his activity and energy kept pace with their requirements. No one, it is true, knew better than he the virtues of that "masterly inactivity," by which Spanish officials put an end, without tangible offence, to solicitations which they cannot directly refuse to entertain. Yet when he intended to be punctual, or found it necessary, no one could be more prompt and business-like. His audi-

ences began at an earlier hour, and lasted longer, than those of any of his colleagues. His personal participation in the labors of his bureau was greater by far than was customary among personages of his grade, and yet, even during the sessions of the Cortes, which occupied him several hours daily, he found leisure to contribute regularly to an encyclopædia of political and civil law, which was then published periodically in the capital, with the highest approbation of the profession. When it is borne in mind, that the ministerial departments in Spain are very paradises of the *dolce far niente*, — where labor is so comfortably distributed, that its stages are counted by the *cigarritos* which young gentlemen of spirit can demolish between a very late breakfast and an early dinner or earlier *paseo*, — it will not be wondered that a man of Arrazola's habits and capacity for affairs should have climbed with moderate luck to the high places of the state. A genius for intrigue is no doubt an excellent item of capital for a politician; charlatanism, too, has frequently its miraculous uses, and a fortunate hit or a happy accident will often achieve, in a moment, what a lifetime of merit and toil will end in vain search of. In the main, nevertheless, — though the notion may seem a strange one, — the surest method of attaining station is to be, in some sort, fit for it. Half the pains men sometimes take to pass themselves off for what they are not, would suffice, in many instances, to make them what they ought to be. It must, upon the whole, be a more costly and laborious process to win by cheating, than to lose with unsoiled hands. Whether Sr. Arrazola embodied the cardinal virtues or not, can make no difference in the truth of these reflections.

Don Juan Bravo Murillo, the Minister of Finance, was oftener heard in the Cortes than any of his colleagues. In truth, he had no sinecure ; for money, which is only the root of all evil elsewhere, has in Spanish politics possession of the whole tree, and, to be safely intrusted with its cultivation and the gathering and keeping of its golden apples, a man must be of long suffering, as of sharp eyes and busy hands. It is an occupation which no doubt pays well, when fairly understood and wisely exercised, but it has its manifold tribulations, notwithstanding, like all other the good things of earth. Every one knows that the Spanish treasury has long been free from any symptoms of plethora. Sr. Bravo Murillo consequently found himself, like many of his predecessors, in a quadruple quandary. He had to pay expenses, and if he did not keep himself in funds, the mouths which he left empty had no other occupation than to cry aloud and spare him not. If he talked of increasing the taxes, the voices of those who were to pay them, and of all the economists and calculators in the Cortes, were lifted up, in chorus, against him. If, by way of compromising matters, he made promises, — to the hungry, to feed them when he could get the means, — and to the tax-payers, to devise some scheme of raising money without taxation, — he was of course called on to redeem both promises at once, which he could not find other than inconvenient. If, in his despair, he dared to name the only possible mode of salvation, — the suppression of fiscal abuses, the abolition of useless offices, the reduction of overgrown salaries, the introduction of strict, manly, prudent economy into all branches of the public service, — the sting of

every drone in the hive pierced him at once, — the present and the future were in arms against him, — those who had and those who hoped to have. What was he to do, then? His estimates fell below his necessities, and his collections were sure to fall below his estimates. He had no alternative left, but to keep his temper, and make speeches, — which taxed nothing but the public patience. The *Progresistas* besieged him in front, and he returned their fire with his best battery. Sr. Gonzalez Bravo, an enemy from the *Moderado* camp, gave him a shot from the rear, and Sr. Bermudez de Castro, Sr. Moron, and others of the same political fellowship, planted guns on his flanks. He threw them back ball for ball, and shell for shell. His foes — and especially those of the *Moderado* opposition — were not satisfied with attacking his views, which were surely vulnerable enough, but must needs set up theories and schemes of their own, which were perhaps more so. Like a prudent man, he immediately turned on the offensive, and if he did not succeed in demolishing the projects of the adversary, he at least withdrew attention from his own, which was quite as well.

It seems to me, that I rarely, during any of my visits to the Chamber of Deputies, escaped finding Sr. Murillo, at some time or other, and for a long time, on his feet. His voice and manner were so exceedingly monotonous and invariable, that he appeared to be always saying the same thing in the same way, — and, indeed, I am hardly, to this day, sure that he was not. Lord Castlereagh and Moore's pump seemed to be his models of elocution, and the "cheerful, voluntary air" and

virtuous expression with which he took and gave his blows, must have been studied from Elia's portrait of the happy borrower. On one occasion, however, when he had the game in his own hands, I heard him speak out, boldly, aggressively, and without reserve. The occasion and his sentiments will illustrate the reverence with which constitutional forms and liberal principles were treated by the *Moderados*, when they chose to give themselves the rein.

The constitution requires that the *presupuestos*, or financial estimates, shall be presented to the Cortes, in due course, with the plan and rates of taxation proposed, for consideration and discussion. The government, under various pretexts, had postponed the discharge of this disagreeable duty until the latest possible day; but the budget had, at the time I am about to refer to, been for some short period in the possession of the legislature. Several of the Deputies had given notice of their intention to submit views and reports upon various interesting points, and the whole policy of the administration, financial and of all other sorts, had already begun to undergo able and critical examination. In point of parliamentary ability, the opposition had, unequivocally, the advantage, besides having the right, as well as the popular, side of the principal questions in controversy. The government, it is true, exercised absolute control over a large and subservient majority, but, although the legislative triumph of its measures was thus placed beyond the reach of doubt, there was no concealing the fact, that the speeches of the opposition members were producing, and were likely further to produce, a most serious impression on the public mind.

This result — the great end and aim of free discussion — it became necessary for the administration to avert. It could not be prevented without a violation of the spirit of the constitution, but Narvaez was not a man to be balked by trifles of that sort. As usual, he spared circumlocution and pretence, and went directly to his point. On the 8th of January, the Minister of Finance made his appearance in the Cortes, in full uniform, and, ascending the tribune, read the draft of a brief statute, wherein her Majesty, with the approbation of the Cortes, declared, in a single clause, that the whole budget was a law, in the lump, as it stood, to the same effect as if duly considered and adopted in each and all of its parts. The Chamber was taken aback. Indignation, astonishment, and denunciation were in the countenances and on the lips of the opposition. Even the trained bands of the Ministry were staggered by the downright boldness of the blow. But there was no child's play meant. The decree was introduced to be adopted, and it was soon understood that, when that work should be done, the Cortes were to be prorogued, with a view to their speedy dissolution. The project was referred to a committee of ministerial partisans, who, after taking their own time, reported it back to the house, precisely as it had been given to them. Some of the opposition presses, which took strong ground against the outrage, had the editions of their papers which were most offensive suppressed by order of the authorities. In the mean time, when the project came again before the house, a few prominent Deputies of the opposition were allowed, for appearance' sake, to deliver speeches against it. I had the good fortune to hear the most of



them, and some were singularly eloquent and powerful. The ablest speakers on the government side rejoined, and Narvaez himself concluded the debate. By the end of the month, the whole ceremony was through, and the law passed by an overwhelming majority. The "previous question" might have done the thing with a little more despatch, and after what we are in the habit of considering — but why, I know not — a more republican manner. No process, however, which is known to legislation, Eastern or Western, could have compassed its object with more perfect simplicity and success.

The Deputies, having performed their functions, were adjourned, from time to time, till the Senate could give its countersign. In that august, but dutiful body, the result could not be long in doubt; but even there the government pursued its usual course, and countenanced the forms of opposition. A few of the refractory Senators were permitted to refresh themselves by saying what they thought, and the coryphæi of the government did their best to counteract the poison so disseminated. It was in winding up on the ministerial side of the debate, that Bravo Murillo announced the views to which I have alluded.

"Senators," he said, "talked of a reduction of the army. They forgot that armies were an element of primary importance in modern governments. All government depended for its security on one of two things, — the influence of the clergy, or the military power. Clerical influence, the support of the late absolute government in Spain, had been destroyed, — whether for good or for ill there was no need that he should say; though,

so far as his own opinion was concerned, he had no hesitation in saying that it was for ill. At all events, however, it existed no longer, and there was nothing left in its absence to protect society, to maintain order, to support government, but the military arm. It was useless to talk about relying on the municipalities, for they were not worthy of reliance; and as to the national militia, it was both costly and unsafe. It took men from the field, from the workshop, and from commerce, — paralyzing those vital departments of industry, and putting arms, besides, in dangerous hands. There was nothing left but standing armies, — and *cuidado!* let Senators bear in mind, that modern society; this society of progress, and learning, and civilization, and ideas, is not easily kept down. It requires a larger force than older societies needed, and if we happen to live in such a state of things, we must be content to meet the heavier obligations it imposes.”

He then touched upon the subject of a reduction of taxes. “As to economy,” he said, “it was ridiculous to ask it in the manner in which it was urged. He did not and would not pretend — he should be disparaging himself were he to pretend — that he could reduce the amount of contributions a single *cuarto*. There was not one maravedi too much levied. The country was quite rich enough to bear the present taxes. It ought to bear them, and ought not to complain of them. He was willing and anxious to practise all possible economy in the collection of the revenue, so as to make it produce what it was capable of, to the utmost. But even in that particular very little could be done at this day, — very little during this generation. He wished